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*Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem:
in die mala liberabit eum Dominus. [Ps. XL.]*

Sanctus

DA MIHI

ANIMAS CÆTERA TOLLE



History of the Ven. Don Bosco's

EARLY APOSTOLATE.

The notice of readers is called to a volume recently issued by the Salesian Press, Battersea, S. W. Although the *Bulletin* has now been circulated for some sixteen years and has recorded the main events which have marked the development of Don Bosco's work, there had been no really authoritative book in English, which dealt in any complete way with the rise and growth of this work on behalf of the young. The present volume while supplying this need goes a good deal further, revealing many of the wonderful occurrences in the life of the Servant of God and filling gaps which were unavoidable in previous lives.

A recent issue of the *Month* says: A large and handsomely bound volume comes to us from the Salesian Press, Battersea: viz : **The History of Don Bosco's Early Apostolate**. The life of the Venerable Founder is already familiar to Catholic Readers in this country, but here we have an account written by a friend and disciple, who himself lived with the holy man, and witnessed much of what he relates. The story of the first twenty-five years of Don Bosco's apostolate is told in much detail, but it will be read with absorbing interest. The Archbishop of Westminster points out in the Preface the chief lessons of the career of the Ven. Servant of God.

The book is bound in Red Cloth, lettered back and front in gilt, with a Photo of the Ven. Don Bosco as a frontispiece.

Orders may be directed to the Manager. Salesian Press, Battersea, S. W.

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THE HOLY ROSARY.

If the late Sovereign Pontiff had such unbounded confidence in the universal practice of the Rosary, Our Holy Father Pius X. has no more earnest recommendation than to beseech the Mother of God to be the constant protectress of the Church as she has ever been.

The main source of the evils which beset religion is traced to the indifferent lives of so many who should be dutiful children of the Church; and the Popes rightly therefore insist that to place the truths of Faith, and the practice of virtue before the faithful, as is done by the Holy Rosary, would be an efficacious means to draw back those who have gone astray, while at the same time imploring the protection of the Mother of God for the Church in her periods of trial and conflict.

The Venerable Don Bosco never ceased to recommend this devotion to his children and Co-operators.

The care of the young.



IN the previous issue a few of the great educators of olden as well as of modern times gave some of the results of their experience for the consideration and guidance of posterity. Many have made a life-long study of the methods of education, so much has this problem forced itself to the front in succeeding epochs, each apparently providing its particular perils for the young, and desirous of claiming them as its own.

Few will find fault with the suggestions there given, which dealt mainly with the early years of the child, of the need of careful handling from the commencement, just as the plant is tenderly dealt with by the florist. But there the simile ceases; the plant having gained sufficient sap and strength may be safely left to its own resources to develop and come to its ordinary state of perfection. Not so the child. The time of youth, we are told, is beset with dangers, and its first enemy is from within. One is not always persuaded of this; but it would be well in such a matter to take the advice of those who have traversed the same path, and perhaps have only too strong a proof of the pitfalls. The young usually centre their prospects of happiness on some goal towards which the impetus of nature directs them; they fix their gaze on some whom they regard as heroes or leaders or guides, and they cannot brook the warning or

prohibition which would dissuade them from following. And what is the result? It often happens that as they redouble their efforts to rid themselves of all guidance and discipline, those who should curb and correct give up the troublesome charge, or fancy that a relaxation may do good.

But on what principle can that procedure be justified? Is it reasonable to leave the reins when youth is about to enter upon the stage that needs them most? That would be a disastrous and fatal mistake, and, says St. John Chrysostom, may Heaven preserve us from making it, for this is the period when the stormy waves of passion are highest. Do not, therefore, he says, let loose all the pent up winds to ruffle the calm surface of the sea, agitating and convulsing it, as do the evil appetites and perverse inclinations; they are like fierce animals with difficulty kept in the leash; and such are the very nature of the young, which is easily roused, the desires of their opening years, their deceptive imagination, the pleasures of the world, and lastly the crafty tempter, all of which combine to fan the rising flames of the passions. Let them have therefore careful vigilance and complete custody, for if these enemies should find a heart unprepared for attack, an easy conquest would be inevitable.

But not only must a careful watch be continued, it must become more as-

siduous because more concerned in the successful or unhappy issue. What would be said of one, who, having carefully guarded and chained a wild beast while it was young and had neither teeth nor claws, should let it loose just when these dangerous weapons were strongest?... "Three things are hard to me," said the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Solomon, but the fourth I am utterly ignorant of; and these things are: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea and lastly the way of a man in his youth (1). And why is that? Because no eye is searching enough as to be able to see what is hidden in the heart of a youth, or to know what snares are laid for its innocence: a word, sign, a look, any of these may be enough, especially as there is not one christian mother or prudent father who does not deplore the bold impudence with which vice is paraded about in our times; when there is a recognised trade in immoral books and papers: when the very air we breathe seems tainted by the sound of indecent songs and obscene discourses.

Nor is that all. In days gone by the time of youth was always beset with pitfalls, and the young were always heedless; but it was seldom that the mind was so perverted that every hope of a later wisdom or conversion was in vain. There were always rough hands to damage the plant, but its roots remained, and these in time gave forth the fruits of maturity; but now the sa-

crifice of the branches is not enough, roots and the very germs of life are demanded. Then it was usually a case of falling into evil ways, but now Faith itself is given up. Nowadays, when the very idea of God, which is the foundation of right, and the sanction of all duty is banished from society; when the working classes are ignorant of their destiny, and derisively turn their back on the minister of God, who speaks of the Cross and sacrifice, in order to follow the popular journalist who preaches doctrines of equality, of the right to happiness and the morality of enjoyment; when the so-called learned and scientific throw ridicule on the immortality of the soul, on the rewards and punishment in an after life as foolish prejudices, the young who are entering unguardedly on the experiences of life, if abandoned in such surroundings cannot but lose all idea of God and revolt against truth, virtue and Religion. With the loss of Faith the mind is enveloped in impenetrable obscurity and can no longer recognise the duties, the struggles, the meaning of life.

Parents especially, therefore, should strive to recognise the utmost importance of watching over their children as they are passing through these dangerous years, maintaining a prudent and loving watchfulness as they begin to learn and to experience the real difficulties and temptations of life; for as Père Lacordaire says: "We watch carefully only over that which we love;" and true watchfulness is only "a prudent control prompted by love and by a regard for the true interests of those under our charge."

(1) Prov. XXX. 19.

The Ven. Don Bosco's Apostolate.



In the education of youth *John Bosco* having always in mind the divine maxim: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, adopted a system of preventive solicitude, vigilance and charity.

V.

Don Bosco a teacher and educator.

SECTION I.

Don Bosco in the history of education.

Three great personages—writes Doctor Francis Cerruti—shine as brilliant lights in the history of education: Quintilian, Vittorino da Feltre and Don Bosco.

Quintilian, born at Calahorra in Spain about A. D. 42 and taken as a child by his father to Rome, where he lived till about the year 120, was an educationalist and teacher; that is to say he taught for twenty years as master for rhetoric, then having retired to enjoy a well-earned rest, he wrote his principal work: *De institutione oratoria*, dedicated by him to his friend Marcellus Victor and published at the request of the bookseller Trifone; it is thus the fruit of profound study and long experience.

The first of his twelve books without being precisely pedagogical treatises in the present sense of the word, places before us in a learned résumé, whatever is best and most useful in the ancient methods of education. The didactical teachings of Quintilian have preserved, even after the lapse of eighteen centuries, a wonderful freshness, a stamp of actuality, so that one might think they were written recently for our own times, and thus Quintilian, although a teacher of ancient times, might be esteemed under a certain aspect, as a teacher of all times and all places.

On the other hand, Vittorino Rambaldoni, commonly called Vittorino da Feltre from the place of his birth, was a teacher and not an educationalist, for he left no writings. Living from 1377 to 1446, at the latter end of the Middle Ages, he is a proof of the educative power of his own epoch, an epoch too little esteemed because it is too little known. He combined in his teaching whatever of wise and great had been taught

and put in practice concerning the discipline of education, well deserving therefore of that aureola of immortality, with which his successors, of every party or school, have crowded the brow of the teacher of Feltre.

Pedagogue and teacher in one was Don Bosco, the production of the 19th century, one who wrote of education and, at the same time, practised what he had written and taught with marvellous efficacy and success.

Now between these three great men of genius who figure in the history of education, ancient, medioeval and modern, there are so many points of contact, of resemblance, one might even say of identity of judgment of method and even of the science and art of education, that one would take them for contemporaries, or at least as all cast in the same mould, in what relates to the fundamental principles of education and the method to be observed in the physical, intellectual and moral training of youth.

* * *

What should be the first care, the first duty of a teacher, of a master in commencing his noble mission? To make a profound study, says Quintilian, of the individual character of the boys confided to him, and in accordance with this character to regulate his methods of operation; some are slow and need to be stimulated, others are impetuous and require to be prudently restrained; some are animated by an overpowering activity, others are oppressed with languor; to some, at times, the fear of severity is beneficial, but the greater number will not stir or make a step forward without encouragement to spur them on; few are clever, the greater number make progress only with effort and application; some are under the dominion of a lively imagination, in others a precious concentration would make of them untimely philosophers. But all are capable of being educated, continues Quintilian, all may attain the end assigned to them by nature, general and special, if only they find one who understands and encourages them; who possesses the rare talent of regulating and balancing one thing with another, a talent which avoids unseasonable checking or stifling of aspirations;

which amidst an almost infinite variety of dispositions, of temperaments, of characters, of talents, directs all with a loving intelligence to that one end, to which all are called. According to the wise saying of Quintilian, in the work of education, skill is usually more deficient than natural qualities, diligence rather than talent, which is innate in man as the faculty of flying in birds, of running in horses, etc.; for to us activity and perspicacity of mind are natural, which is a sign that the soul is of celestial origin. A proof of this is found in the etymology of the word *ingenium*, from *in nobis genitum*. Therefore let us cast aside all pessimistic ideas as to natural or inherited inability to profit by education, opinions which in most cases are signs of the ignorance or unwillingness of the teacher, the instructor; the father above all, should conceive great hopes as to the future of his child, in this way he will, from the first, attend more diligently to his physical, intellectual and moral training. As soon as the child is fit for it, he will apply him to study without waiting for the age of seven years. Why should we judge one unfit to learn who is susceptible of moral training? The early and precious years of childhood will not thus be lost; all the more as the elements of learning are founded upon memory, which not only exists in little ones, but in them is very active; it is the principal mark of talent and shows itself in two ways, in a facility of perception and fidelity in retaining the remembrance. Unworthy is that system of education which, contrary to nature, does not value, even when it does not entirely dispense with, the exercise of memory in early education, concentrating all its efforts upon the development of the understanding to the physical and moral injury of the children. Most assuredly in this, as in everything else, discretion must be used, so that the memory must not alone be cultivated, nor the pupils be obliged to commit to memory what they do not understand. Give the children, Quintilian wisely observes, dictations and themes which contain ideas not idle or frivolous, but moral and instructive. Their memory will retain these thoughts and ideas even to old age; being implanted in a soul not yet saturated with other ideas, they will be a powerful stimulant to virtuous living.

Thus thought and acted Vittorino da Feltre, who chose long extracts, chiefly instructive, from Cicero and Virgil, from Demosthenes and Homer, explaining them first to his pupils and then causing them to be committed to memory, thus together with the exercise of the understanding they acquired from their earliest years a store of knowledge which remained with them and was useful for their whole life.

Thus did Don Bosco teach and act, for not only did he assign an important place to learning by heart, but the extracts in prose and verse chosen for his boys to commit to memory he would accentuate by declamation or render them more pleasing by song and music: Don Bosco, who required his masters to select as subjects for themes the passages best calculated to promote morality (1).

But education, properly so called, was the first and most essential object, the supreme ideal to which was directed the work of the native of Feltre as well as that of the Piedmontese. Vittorino da Feltre's first care, therefore, was to examine the nature and characteristics of his pupils. Nature, he said, distributes her gifts in varying proportions; to no one does she give all, to few is much given, but she enables all to apply themselves with greater or less success to some part of human knowledge. The capital and decisive point, on which a boy's success turns, is the knowledge which he gains himself, or with the help of his teachers, of the career for which he has natural dispositions and then to prepare himself for it with vigour and confidence.

Now was not this Don Bosco's method? When a boy came to him he examined into his character, his dispositions, his special tendencies, with his glance so full of understanding and loving kindness, penetrating to the inmost recesses of his soul, never allowing himself to be disheartened by the difficulties encountered in the office of a teacher. And what he practised he also taught to others by word and writing. Youths, he wrote in the Rule above mentioned usually manifest one of these characters; a good, ordinary, difficult or bad disposition; but all are susceptible of training. Our duty is therefore, he continues, to find efficacious means for training these characters, so different from one another and acting in divers ways on their social environment, so that none may be an obstacle and much less injurious to another, and that all may gain, some more, some less profit. And that rule which he gave to the teachers, that the most stupid in the class should be the chief object of their solicitude, ever encouraging and never humiliating them, seems but the repetition of what was taught by Quintilian regarding natural talent, with which all, more or less, are provided, and of Vittorino da Feltre's practice, who never banished any one from his school for intellectual incapacity.

What wisdom shines forth in the few, but suggestive pages of Don Bosco on the system or method of the education of youth, a system

(1) Rules for the Salesian Houses, Chapter X.

which in his own opinion, and in that of all well qualified to judge, should be preventive, rather than repressive! Don Bosco has, undoubtedly, successfully solved the problem so difficult in education, that of combining a due severity in the maintenance of order and discipline, (without which no moral or intellectual progress is possible), with a kind and patient charity in the method by which alone minds are subdued and hearts conquered. Now, these very same things were taught by Quintilian and Vittorino da Feltre. Cast aside beating, writes the first of these, which is a slave's punishment, fit only to harden the heart; the master instead, must apply himself to the training of his pupils by constant vigilance, mild and strict at the same time, which by adopting the just mean between laxity and rigour, may hinder the commission of evil, thus obviating the necessity of punishing it afterwards. And Vittorino, in his turn, never left his pupils day or night; moreover, as far as possible, he attended personally to their wants. The greater number of faults were prevented by vigilance and good companionship, for he said, it is well known that solitude is for boys a powerful incitement to evil.

But the chief qualification, absolutely indispensable in a teacher is moral rectitude. Woe to the college or the school where this is wanting, it will become a den of iniquity. And here also we may admire Quintilian, by religion a pagan, but naturally Christian, acting in precisely the same manner as those two Catholic models Vittorino da Feltre and Don Bosco. The orator he exclaims with Cato, must be a good man. He even goes further, for he proclaims without ambiguity that the orator must not only be a good man, but that goodness is an indispensable condition of success. Woe to him in whom the gift of speaking is united with evil-doing, a foe to innocence and truth! Far better were it to be born dumb and bereft of reason, than to turn the gift of Providence to bad account. And it is on these pious principles that he lays the greatest stress in choosing preceptors, requiring, in the first place, that they should be men of good life, then learned, or at least not presumptuous; nothing, he prudently writes, being more detestable than a pretence of learning, or those conceited pedants, haughty, imperious and often cruel who, having proceeded no further than the elements of learning, boast of their knowledge and, under the mask of science, seek to domineer over others in their stupidity. The work of such, continues the immortal pedagogue, will be fatally pernicious in the moral and intellectual training of their pupils. Such was the case with Leonidas, the teacher of Alexander, who, as

Diogenes of Babylon relates, instilled into his royal pupil, the illustrious Macedonian, certain vices which remained with him from childhood to maturity and when he was already a great king.

In this language do we not seem to hear the Piedmontese Teacher who required unblemished morality and good habits as a condition *sine qua non* in teachers and scholars and who, in his Rules of education, characterised the proud student as a *stupid ignoramus!* Nor could it be otherwise, given Don Bosco's noble idea of a teacher, for he esteemed teaching to be a mission and the teacher a missionary, described by him as an *individual consecrated to the good of his pupils, and who must therefore be prepared to face any trouble, any labour to attain his end which is the secular, religious, scientific education of his pupils* (1).

Nor were the methods of Vittorino any different; he would not admit to his *Giocosa* (2) any Masters except those who were religious-minded and moral. Still more; with a strictness which may appear excessive to those who do not realize how speedily a fatal impression may be produced in youthful minds, he excluded from the Institute all persons not well known to him. And this becoming demeanour and docility he exacted from all without any human respect, so that whilst preceptor of the children of the Duke Gonzaga, he succeeded in teaching good manners and submission to his eldest son Louis, who at first left much to be desired in this respect. It is not therefore surprising that numbers, eager to learn, flocked to Vittorino's educational establishment not only from Italy, but from France, from Germany, from the Low Countries and even from Greece, much as in our own days people leave Italy for the purpose, as they say, of completing their studies.

There is, however, one point in the work of education peculiar to Vittorino da Feltre and Don Bosco, and it is that of Christian piety, as a means, as the principal factor in education, a point which could not be realized by Quintilian's pedagogical talent, unilluminated by the light of faith. And here we may admire the wonderful resemblance between these two great teachers. Vittorino who loved our Blessed Lady with tender affection and from his earliest years consecrated himself to her in the practice of holy purity, a virtue which he kept unsullied to his death; Vittorino who heard Mass every day, approached

(1) See above. The preventive System in education

(2) *Giocosa* or *Giotosa* according to others, was the name given to the abode assigned by the Duke of Mantova to Vittorino as a school-house for his sons and which became, little by little, through the fame of the teacher an Institute of world-wide celebrity (Cerruti, *History of Pedagogy in Italy* Chap. XIII).

the Holy Table frequently and spent much time, before beginning his daily occupation, in prayer, and in reading the Holy Scriptures and the Hymns of the Church; Vittorino who never failed on Feast days to listen to the Word of God and on those days more particularly multiplied the works of charity which were his daily practice; Vittorino who with burning words and discourses full of faith recommended to his pupils the frequentation of the Holy Sacraments and founded upon them his educational edifice: what a marvellous resemblance do we not see with Don Bosco, so devout to Mary Help of Christians, careful and constant observer of chastity, a model priest at the altar, in the pulpit and the confessional; with Don Bosco eminent in faith and charity, who preached and promoted, with great and prudent zeal, the frequentation of the Sacraments and who declared and wrote to all and everywhere that there can be no true education which is not strengthened and supported by frequent Communion! And yet more; there is one point in which the Piedmontese teacher is sublimely alone and that is in the class of children and youths which he made the special object of his educational solicitude. In spite of all, the education of Quintilian always preserved an aristocratic basis, the natural consequence of such a religion as paganism in which the distinction of caste was a principle, and the slave, the plebeian even accounted of a different nature from that of the *senatus populusque Romanus*. Vittorino, though profoundly and wholly Christian, devoted himself almost exclusively in his educational work, to the higher and middle classes. Don Bosco, on the contrary, living at a time in which the classes, lowest in the social scale, tend upwards to a position of fraternity, liberty, and equality rightly understood, to which they have a claim as Christians and to whom it is most necessary to devote care and attention so that they should not overstep the mark in the exercise of their rights, nor in using them forget their duties; Don Bosco, I say, took as the principal and almost exclusive object of his paternal solicitude the youth of the so called lower classes, even the poorest and the most neglected. Still more, a special propensity powerfully attracted him to the little rascals, to his *biricchini* as he called them, to those, whom a haughty but lazy pedantry, condemns as incorrigible; these he called to him and treated as sons, these he liberated from prison, saved from vice, raised up from the lowest depths; these he brought back to God and replaced in an honourable position.

One evening in 1860 the good priest returned to his Oratory surrounded by seven bad boys, between twelve and eighteen years of age; from

their ragged clothes, sullen or saucy faces untrained and neglected appearance you could judge what they were like. —“Be very patient with them” he said in consigning them to our care, “they are more unfortunate than wicked.” And indeed they needed much patience, submitting to no rule, ready at any moment to quarrel, addicted to bad words and blasphemy. But Christian charity triumphed at last; with them disappeared for ever the famous *cocca* of Valdocco, that troop of young brigands from twelve to eighteen years of age, against whom the police were powerless. One of them, having emigrated a few years later to America, afterwards returned from Venezuela with a good fortune and went first thing to Don Bosco to recount his adventures and thank him once more for all he had done for him. After relating this incident Don Bosco, turning to us, concluded:

“It is not true that boys are incorrigible; work for them, love them with Christian affection, these boys too often more unfortunate than wicked; a strong will, animated by the grace of God, overcomes difficulties esteemed insurmountable.”

The ultimate end, the sovereign ideal of Don Bosco's teaching is the moral and social elevation of the young proletariat by raising to a worthy life those whom science or rather ignorance, hating labour and devoid of the spirit of self sacrifice would condemn to perpetual incompetence, intellectual and moral. Such is the educational character, notably conspicuous, in Don Bosco, styled *the man of his era*; of Don Bosco *unum et idem*, in system and method, with Vittorino, because both were the product of Christianity, men of faith, of the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman faith. The Gospel, writes Joseph de Maistre, divinizes the laws of nature; Vittorino and Don Bosco divinized education. Assuredly they will ever be, one the model of the Christian lay-teacher, the other the pattern of the Catholic priest employed in education. From the Giocosa of Vittorino there came forth, says Andres, as from the Trojan horse, and spread over the whole world, men distinguished in science, in literature and in the military career. In Don Bosco's school were trained and from it went forth into the old and New World men illustrious in every branch of learning and in every kind of social career, linked to him, the lowly priest of Valdocco, to him, a father even more than a teacher, by such powerful bonds of affection, by a strenuous love partly superhuman, as that influence, that moral power, that charm which he exercised over the hearts of the young were, in like manner, superhuman; over the heart, to whose strenuous, pure and pious training were in

a special manner directed, the care and solicitude of one who elevated the spiritual fatherhood to its highest point. The Vicar of Jesus-Christ, two years ago, honoured Don Bosco, with the title of Venerable; but his own sons, the sons of his heart, had already raised for him a throne of love. Who better than he has succeeded in penetrating the deepest secrets of the human heart and in making of this heart, purified and sanctified by grace, an instrument fit for the most noble and arduous enterprises? Rogers, a professor at the University of Oxford, wisely observes, "If the secret of great social achievements is to be found in religion, I shall not, surely, be far from the truth in asserting that in the heart lies the secret of Don Bosco's greatness, in the heart that powerful impetus for the extension of the kingdom of righteousness; in the heart that intense, incessant, marvellous activity in labouring for the salvation of the young, above all when poor and exposed to danger."

II.

Don Bosco's educational system and modern teachers.

Dr. Francis Förster, professor of the art of education in the University of Zurich in his work "*Scuola e Carattere*" which is, undoubtedly, a most important contribution to the teaching of obedience and the reform of school training, thus sums up in a final analysis his ideas:

"But how is this training of the character to be organized? In the first place we have advised occasional discussions regarding the duties and the daily conflicts of school life. These conversations lead to the institution of special lessons for ethical teaching, destined not to take the place of religious instruction but only to complete it in the matter of practical applications. Such lessons would give the teachers an opportunity of insisting on the spiritual side of scholastic training, and in general of uniting their entire pedagogical work with the training of character."

"Besides giving these lessons, the teacher should also learn to season the whole course of study with the ethical element.... For myself I have no doubt that education, entering thus into all the problems of character training, will succeed little by little in mitigating and putting an end to the grave conflict now raging in all countries between the secular school and the church. The more the secular school, influenced by an ever growing misunderstanding, loses all connection with the religious care of the soul, to devote itself more exclusively to the intellect,

the more plainly will the secular teachers perceive that school work and routine, deprived of the grand inspirations of religion, will become but a rusty mechanism, destined in the end to come to a dead stop, owing to the loss of that moving power which proceeds from the soul. Then they will begin to devote themselves more eagerly to the cultivation of ethical forces and in this way they will find out that the ethical care of the soul, by the intimate nature of its psychology, needs the impulse and help of religious principles."

And after having shown in the various proposals of an educational and moral character "the indispensability of religion in such a scheme and the absolute necessity that this care of the soul should be founded upon religious principles", "from this—he says—one is led to cast a glance on the problem of the *separation of Church and State*. In principle these two powers should no more be separated from one another than the body from the soul in its earthy existence. All participation men have in the life of the State and all training for that same life renders necessary the training of the conscience; but the training of conscience is impossible without instruction in the mysteries of religion, in which the human soul, by means of sublime testimonies and events has its conscience awakened to its superhuman destiny. Religion alone speaks the primitive language of the soul; whoever wishes to reach the soul, to quicken its life, cannot do so without religion."

Whoever has followed us thus far will easily understand from these words the place taken by Don Bosco's system of training in regard to true education.

Förster, in the introduction already cited, proceeds: "the extraordinary importance of school training in the formation of character and the social education of the young has not hitherto been clearly recognized except by American teachers" but in the text, towards the end of Chapter III he has the following page:

"As an appendix to this chapter of outlines I will cast a glance upon what other educators, who follow the same course, have done. I will mention in particular the preventive system of Don Bosco:

"*In these latter times the principles and the results obtained by the Catholic educator Don Bosco (Turin) have attracted the attention of other educators of various types*". He also substitutes for the "repressive system" the "preventive system" and says of the latter: "*The Preventive system puts the pupil on his guard in such a way that the educator may always speak the language of the heart in school time, or when it is past. The educator, having won the heart of his pupil, will*

be able to exercise great influence, by good advice and also by correcting him even when he has entered a business house, the civil service, or other employment. For this and many other reasons it would appear that the Preventive System should be employed in preference to the Repressive".

"The Repressive System" — he continues — "may prevent disorder. But rarely will it improve the delinquents; and it has been remarked that boys do not forget the punishment received, and generally they cherish a feeling of bitterness with the desire to throw off the yoke and take vengeance."

For Don Bosco also the "preventive system" consists in friendly discussions with the boys, in entering into their wishes, their struggles and their weaknesses, in such a way as to render it impossible for them to fall into error."

Förster does not hesitate for an instant in recognizing that the proposals of the American teachers have, nevertheless, always a weak side and this is the shallowness of the principles on which they are founded. "They affirm" — he says — "and not without reason, that school training must put itself more in harmony with the requirements of our industrial democracy, but they do not reflect that the requirements of a special phase of social life cannot be taken as the supreme rule of moral education and that the education of a man must be animated by ideals which, above the changing necessities of the times, determine what are the things, that, in all ages, suffice to elevate and strengthen the spiritual side in man and to maintain an intimate union between all men...."

Now here is precisely the secret of the admiration which surrounds the educative system of Don Bosco, and still more its marvellous efficacy.

"The system introduced and practised by Don Bosco in the education of youth" — writes the lamented Don Bonetti (1) "besides being agreeable to reason and Religion, appears more conformable to the spirit of the times. In those years there was an outcry in Italy and elsewhere against absolute Governments; great complaints were made against the severity of the measures generally made use of in governing the people and in the administration of justice. Even the Princes, most strongly attached to the *ancien régime*, in order to avoid calamity and prevent insurrection, had thought it advisable to yield to the popular demands and introduce into their States radical reforms both in the civil and judicial administration. Hence public festivities and rejoicings in honour of liberty such

as had never been seen or heard of... Now these aspirations after a milder government, seconded by their respective Princes, moved the boys also to require a more paternal and affectionate care from their Superiors...."

But the excellence of the educative system of the great Apostle of youth in the nineteenth century, does not merely consist in its timeliness; the best part of it is shown in its marvellous results, which can never perish because they are the assured consequences of *reason* and *religion* on which the preventive System of Don Bosco is founded, and on which it rests.



From the Ruins of Messina.

His Grace the Archbishop visits the remains of the Salesian Institute.

Our Superior General has received the following details from the scene of the disaster. One could hardly imagine, says the writer, how eagerly all classes looked forward to the month consecrated to Our Lady, for there seemed to be a widespread feeling of the need of her maternal aid. Quite a large crowd of survivors gathered to hear the evening discourses that we had arranged, and as we had prepared some First Communicants for Easter Sunday, offering the first-fruits to Our Lord, so now we had others prepared for the Feast of our powerful Patroness.

On the vigil of the Feast it rained in torrents, quite out of all connection with the time of the year, and some slight tremors had the effect of leading all to the feet of Our Lady to ask her protection. During the night sleep was impossible. The wind shook the remnants of the roof of a neighbouring factory causing a rumbling like the falling of rocks down a precipice; while the rain fell steadily, flowing from the improvised roofs on to the covering of our beds. It was already three a. m. and no sleep had been possible. At four we rose. There were some reassuring signs out towards the East, but the rain as yet showed no inclination to cease. Nevertheless we pulled the bell that is attached to the old eucalyptus tree and towards five o'clock the First Communion children commenced to arrive. They seemed not to heed the weather, and came stumbling over the heaps of débris some alone, some in groups; it seemed to be almost an act of heroism to come out on such a morning and at so

(1) History of the Salesian Oratory.

early an hour. By seven o'clock the chapel was packed, for the greatest possible number sought to avoid the rain, and yet the surrounding space was crowded.

I announced that His Grace the Archbishop had sent a special blessing to all the First Communicants, and granted to all present a hundred days indulgence; then putting on the beautiful chasuble sent by His Grace for that ceremony I began the Holy Sacrifice. All was still within the chapel for ruins lay all around outside, the incessant rain was the only disturber of the solitude. At the time of Holy Communion the

That evening the Archbishop had arranged to come to the site of the former school to give the Sacrament of Confirmation to about sixty of the survivors of Messina. However about four in the afternoon heavy clouds gathered, and rain made everyone seek the shelter of our small improvised coverings. The Archbishop himself was caught in the rain and had to take refuge in an old stable to wait till the sky cleared; but this happened too late to allow of the function being held, so that it was postponed till the following Sunday. That day was all that could be desired and after the usual Sunday services



MESSINA — First Communicants.

usual exhortation was made, reference being made to the unusual circumstances; I invited the children to pray for their native place, that it might rise up again, if not as beautiful as before, yet more endowed with the spirit of Faith in the hearts of its children..... The emotion on all sides reminded me that I had touched upon too scrowful a topic, opening old wounds, but the subject has now become a part of our very lives. Many others approached the Holy Table, making the Feast-day quite a unique celebration.

At the end of Mass the rain stopped; the winds had carried the clouds far out to sea and the sun shone out. With this improvement there was a general raising of spirits and the children's breakfast was quite a happy scene.

about hundred people assembled for the Confirmation. He seated himself beneath the eucalyptus tree, on whose branches had been hung pictures of Our Lady Help of Christians, of Don Bosco and His Holiness the Pope, while the broken spars of the building were hung with festoons and flags. There he listened to the singing of the *Sacerdos et Pontifex*, and a short address suited to the circumstances and surroundings. I then bade His Grace welcome in the name of all the survivors and of the Salesians and thanked him for his constant efforts for the general amelioration and welfare.

In reply the Archbishop said: "What a contrast, my children, between yesterday and today. A year ago, just about the same hour I sat here among the eucalyptus trees. That

was also the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians which the Sons of Don Bosco were keeping. Youngsters were playing round about, coming to kiss the Bishop's ring and ask a blessing. But where are they now? Only too emphatically do the ruins round about give me an answer. They are gone; the boys who stood by and the priests who were labouring with me to *restore all things in Christ*: all are gone! *Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine!* and may my blessing go with them to their eternal repose.

But what about us who are left? Are we to be overcome by the grief that all must feel? That would be unavailing. If God has spared us in this life, he has certainly done so for our good, and His inscrutable designs must be praised. Away then with too much anxiety. Each of us has work before him. Before the earthquake the priests only were called to do the work of God, but now each of you must be a missionary..... Perhaps the useless or rotten branches have been cut away; the future of Messina is in our hands. Therefore, fathers and mothers, strive to raise up a new generation of good Catholics and upright citizens. You must be apostles in the regeneration, sowing the seed of holy doctrine and of good example.

And you children, pray that you may grow up obedient and fearing God. Come regularly to the Church and the Sacraments and pray that you may soon have another Oratory for the education of your minds and hearts. May the gifts of the Holy Spirit now descend upon you and may the blessing bestowed by me be a pledge of those of heaven sent by Our Lady Help of Christians, and by the Apostle of her devotion, the Venerable Don Bosco.

The Sacrament of Confirmation was then administered, followed by Benediction. The Archbishop stayed some time with us, discussing plans and recent events.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi the bells of the surrounding churches rang out across the ruins and echoed around the standing remains of houses and monuments. Seldom have I witnessed such devotion among the people and such eagerness to attend Mass. After saying Mass and giving Holy Communion to a great number, I went up to the Church of the Conventual Fathers to sing the High Mass. The procession commenced immediately afterwards, and I had the honour, not without protest, of carrying the Most Holy Sacrament on that unique occasion. Among the followers were the re-united members of the Don Bosco Young Men's Association. On the *Monte dei Cappucci* an altar had been prepared and the crowds halted for the benediction. While kneeling in ex-

pectation, a frightful rumbling suddenly burst upon the silence of that solemn moment; the earth shook and a prolonged tremor threw the crowd into consternation. However, I cried out to them not to move, saying: "Do not fear, Jesus is with us" and the swaying crowd remained still, then knelt again and received the Benediction. Being somewhat rested the procession moved on. Along by the sea front the 84th Infantry regiment was stationed. Another altar had been prepared there and some four thousand people awaited the blessing. As the Sacred Host was carried past the regiment saluted, the band commenced the royal march, the people knelt and I prayed for their resignation amid so many misfortunes.....

L. FARINA,
Salesian.



DOMINIC SAVIO



It is with particular satisfaction that the Superiors of the Society draw the attention of Readers to the cause of Don Bosco's pupil Dominic Savio. Some months back it was announced that the Sacred Congregation of Rites had ordained the revision of all the writings of the young Servant of God; and now, while conforming in all things to the authority of the Sacred Congregation, we are able to give to the public some parts of the letters sent by the Princes and Bishops of the Church to our Superior General; in bringing out another edition of the biography of Dominic Savio, as written by Don Bosco himself, some of these letters will be given in full as an act of homage to the Cardinals and Bishops of the Church.

In these publications we hasten to attest formally our desire to conform in all things to the decrees of the Church, and not in any way to forestall its decision; and also in the name of our Superior General to thank the Eminent Prelates for their interest and courtesy in these preliminary arrangements.



I.

The Personality of Dominic Savio.

Rome, Oct. 25th. 1908.

In the life of Dominic Savio, as written by the Ven. Don Bosco, there is found a brief survey of the development of the Salesian Society, and its evident results on the education of youth. Given such a Director and such pupils the blessing of God was necessarily assured; and among the group of virtuous youths the figure of Savio stands out with such attractiveness in its simplicity and holiness that one is reminded of the words of the Psalmist: *Minuisti eum paullo minus ab angelis*. We who are advanced in years feel humiliated in the presence of such exalted virtue in a youth of fifteen; but those who are still in the flower of youth will be stimulated to follow along the path of christian piety. Savio was fortunate in having Don Bosco for a biographer; thus the life of a saint was written by a saint, and what was more singular by one who was his master in the way of perfection. For which reason I heartily desire that our Holy Mother the Church will raise both to the honours of her altars, while we already have devotion to both in our heart.

A. Cardinal AGLIARDI.

The Society of Jesus was adorned in its very commencement by the lustre of three of its youthful sons, St. Aloysius, St. Stanislaus Kostka, and St. John Berchmans. Nearer to our own times the Congregations of the Passionists and the Redemptorists had the Blessed Francis Posenti and St. Gerard Majella. Considering these things it seemed to me that in modern times, that is, after the reformation God had designed to draw the young to Himself by means of the young. In fact had not Our Lord always a predilection for the young, and in our own times has not Our Lady manifested herself at Salette, and at Lourdes to quite young souls. Our ancient world therefore is to be renewed by means of the young. Consider how many devout souls there are in the many schools, colleges and Oratories, how many followers of St. Aloysius and Gerard Majella, and Children of Mary. This can signify nothing else than that the future will be the triumph of the Church. Where there is youth, there is life, there is the virtue of God who is always young.

I rejoice, therefore, that the Institute of the Ven. Don Bosco, following those of St. Ignatius, of St. Paul of the Cross, of St. Alphonsus, can in our own days hold up to the young a model of sanctity—a boy of fifteen—whom we shall surely see one day raised to the altars of the Church. The life of Dominic Savio has examples of eminent sanctity. I would call it the most precious seal that God has placed upon the work of the Ven. Founder.

But finally I would remark that in the case of the Religious Orders above mentioned, they present to us their young men who have been taken out of the world into religion and already clothed in the religious habit of their order. The Salesians however can show their scholars one of themselves, a boy, a student, as though to say: *Here is one of yourselves, follow in his steps*. Here is the Providence of God, here is the finger of God.

CARMELO PUJIA

Archbishop of Santa Severina.

Virtue always has its own peculiar attractions, but when it shines forth in the young it gains an added lustre. I have read the life of the young Dominic Savio written by the Ven. Don Bosco. They were two souls that understood one another perfectly. Under the guidance of Don Bosco, Savio could not but ascend from virtue to virtue *de virtute in virtutem*. The pages themselves give forth the perfume of holiness. One cannot but admire the dispositions of Providence in guiding that privileged soul in its early years, causing it to make strides along the way of perfection. Happy he! and happy those young souls who shall follow him *in odorem unguentorum ejus*. I intend to have the book read by the Seminarists and then placed in our library of the Festive Oratory, and also to hang the picture of Dominic Savio in the same place that it may inspire others to follow his example, and that he may obtain for them holiness and purity of life.

B. QUINTARELLI
Bishop of Rieti.

The young Servant of God, Dominic Savio is one of the flowers of Paradise, fashioned after Don Bosco's own heart, or rather according to the Sacred Heart of Jesus of which the Ven. Don Bosco was a faithful copy; for he was able to say with all truth to his disciples: Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ: *Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi*.

To the young, in whose education example is all powerful, Savio will be a model in the school, to inspire them with hatred of sin, and to preserve them from the corruption of the world, and to lead them on continually in the spirit of piety, of purity and christian perfection.

DOMINIC AMBROSI
Bishop of Terracina.

II.

Savio as an example to the young.

The following extracts from letters show more clearly the influence which may be exerted on the young by the example of the life of this young Servant of God.

..... The subject of this narrative is worthy to be proposed as a model of every virtue to youths of every class.

SEBASTIAN Cardinal MARTINELLI.

..... I am sure that the edifying life of the young Dominic Savio will supply a source of encouragement and a stimulus to the boys of our times, and that amid the gloom which surrounds modern society, the appearance of this ray of light will guide many to a safer path.

MARIANO Cardinal RAMPOLLA,

The extraordinary virtues of this youth make him worthy to be pointed out as an example to our young people. May God grant us to see many following in his footsteps.

Cardinal de AZEVEDO.

Savio is exactly the example to hold up to our boys, for the young generations have nowadays to pass through grave dangers and many difficulties.

GIULIO TONDI

Apostolic Nuntio in Portugal.

I have read with pleasure and edification the life of the young Servant of God, Dominic Savio, and two thoughts struck me while doing so; the first was one of humble admiration of the ways of God, who can make such heroic virtues shine forth in one, *etiam in tenera aetate*; the second was a desire that He should give us many endowed with similar gifts among the young of our age. Perhaps it is with this design that Providence has caused this process to be set on foot for the Beatification of this pupil of the

first Salesian Oratory. I would desire it with all my heart.

VINCENZO SARDI,
Apostolic Delegate at Constantinople.

In other places too, the decree concerning the writings of Dominic Savio gave considerable impulse to the movement, which had previously begun to arouse interest in the life of the young Servant of God; an interest which has already had good results, and will aid in promoting the cause which has now been taken up by the Church.

INDULGENCES

which may be gained by the Co-operators.

The following plenary indulgences may be gained by all the Co-operators who, having confessed and communicated, shall make a visit to a Church or public chapel, or in the case of communities a private chapel, and pray for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

Every month.

1. On any one day at the choice of the associate.
2. On the day the monthly exercise of a good death is made.
3. Whenever the Co-operators shall say five times the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, and *Glory be to the Father* for the welfare of Christendom, and once the same prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father they may gain the indulgences of the Stations in Rome, of the Portiuncula, of Jerusalem and of St. James of Compostella; these indulgences, moreover, are all applicable to the Holy Souls in Purgatory and can be gained by the Co-operators as often as the prayers are said, as long as they are in the grace of God.

In the month of November.

1. Nov. 1st. The Feast of All Saints.
2. Nov. 21st. The Presentation of Our Lady.
3. Nov. 22nd. St. Cecilia.

The complete list of indulgences and privileges may be found in the issue of January 1905, or in the Co-operator's manual.





Chertsey on Thames.

A very interesting entertainment was given by the pupils at the close of the scholastic year in the Boarding and Day School of the Nuns of Mary Help of Christians. Music, recitations and drill furnished enjoyable items, each section providing its quota to the programme.

The terminal examinations showed some very good results, many of the subjects reaching quite a high standard. The subjects taught in the girls' department include everything in the customary syllabuses of secondary schools, including languages, music, drawing and needlework, and in all of these the classes showed careful training. The boys, forming a junior section apart, are grounded in preparatory work and drawing and French, their work being mainly planned with a view to their passing on to the Salesian School for Boys in London as soon as they are old enough.

Chertsey possesses several advantages from a scholastic point of view. It is very prettily situated on the Thames, in close proximity to river and meadow, and is at the same time within easy reach of London. From the progress already made it ought to have a successful future. Particulars may be had from the Rev. Mother, Eastworth House, Eastworth Road, Chertsey, Surrey.

*

Turin.

The Oratory has lately had cause for congratulation in the honours bestowed upon two of the members of the Society. Fr. Paolo Ubaldi D. D., one of the professors in the College of the Missions at Valsalice, has been appointed to a professorship in Greek in the Royal University of Turin, he being the first Salesian to receive such an appointment.

Fr. James Mezzacasa, Theological Professor in the House of Studies at Foglizzo, has been honoured with the degree of *Doctor in Biblical Science*. It was given by the Pontifical Biblical

Commission in Rome, the recipient being the first Italian to receive this degree, which he won with distinction.

For the patronal feast of the boys at the Oratory, St. Aloysius, there was a special service in the Sanctuary, and His Lordship Mgr. Castrale presided over the commemorations of the feast-day. A large number of past-students, both clergy and laymen attended the reunion. They decided on the definite formation of a Federation of the past students of all Salesian Institutes, such as was lately proposed by the Oratory Association.

The Holy Father has sent a massive silver chalice to the chapel of the Salesian School at Ferrara. In return the students had the First Mass in which it was used offered for the Holy Father's intentions.

*

The Congress at Milan.

Last month there was held at Milan the fourth Congress of the Festive Oratories. The initiative was taken by the Bishops of Lombardy who were supported by the Bishops of all the dioceses of Italy, there being general co-operation from the Associations of young men and the gymnastic Federations under the patronage of His Royal Highness the Duke of Genoa. The Holy Father passed a warm encomium on the action of the Lombard Episcopate and sent an autograph letter to the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, that being the highest sanction which has as yet been given to the work of the Oratories. His Holiness said:

Your Eminence!

It is with very great satisfaction, My dear Lord Cardinal, that I learn of the approaching celebration of the Festive Oratory Congress, to commemorate the third centenary of the establishment of these gatherings of the young in your Archdiocese. I am quite in agreement with the sentiments expressed by my Venerable

Brethren and by the Bishops of that ecclesiastical Province in promoting your excellent idea, and in wishing success to the existing Festive Oratories and the establishment of them in all parts of Italy. If all that can be done to the advantage of religion and society is based chiefly on the proper training of the young, it must be clear to all that the Oratories are a most important factor in it; for by their means the young generations are enabled to spend the Sunday and Feast-days in a proper manner, removed from the dangers of idling in the streets and of bad company, religious instruction is continued, op-

stolic Blessing, while I remain, My dear Lord Cardinal

Yours devotedly

PIUS P. P. X.

To His Eminence the Cardinal
Archbishop of Milan.

*

At the tomb of the Ven. D. Bosco On the outskirts of Turin, almost a suburb of it, is the district of Valsalice, where, in the college of the Missions, the tomb of the Ven. Don Bosco is built. While



VALSALICE, TURIN — Salesian Festive Oratory.

portunities are given for approaching the Sacraments, and they are improved morally and intellectually by the recreations and sports which are provided for them.

Convey, therefore, to the zealous priests who are engaged on the committees my heartiest good wishes, for their success in a work of such importance as is the well-being of the christian family, and assisting the parents to guard the precious charge which God has confided to them: moreover I implore for them and all who are taking part in the work of the Festive Oratories that reward promised by the Holy Spirit to those: *Qui ad justitiam erudiunt multos (fulgebunt) quasi stellae in perpetuas aeternitates;* as a pledge of this I impart most readily the Apo-

the city beyond had several of those Oratories which he himself founded, and which were the first fruits of his prolific harvest, this quiet district seemed to have no need of one; but now, with the growth of suburbs the children are increasing in numbers and an Oratory, with its headquarters at the missionary College mentioned above, has been opened.

Like its prototype it commenced quite unobtrusively with about a dozen boys. By the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians 1908 it had risen to seventy and by the Immaculate Conception to a hundred; evidently it had earned the smile and blessing of Don Bosco, under whose name it had been dedicated and by the Feast of St. Aloysius in June of this year it had

grown to two hundred. Its games were already well-established, it has a dramatic section, and its gymnastic *circle* under the title of *Dominic Savio* numbers forty athletes. Their first meeting was appropriately presided over by the Successor of Don Bosco, the Very Rev. Don Rua, and their banner made its first public appearance in company with that of the Turin Festive Oratory at their annual outing. It is hoped that under the influence and the immediate patronage of Our Venerable Founder it will eventually be a powerful aid in the revival of the true christian spirit in their homes and neighbourhood.

*

Rome The Holy City seemed to be congenial soil for the work of the Oratories, and no doubt the recent displays have done much to arouse enthusiasm and emulation. In the courtyard of the Institute of the Sacred Heart a combined gymnastic fête was given by the associations attached to that Oratory, by the students of the Institute, by the *circle* from the new Institute of Santa Maria Liberatrice and that of St. George. The display was under the direction of Professor E. Martiroli, and was greatly appreciated by a crowded and distinguished audience, among them being Count Mario di Carpegna the President of the Associations and the general secretary of the same.

The band of the Institute was in readiness to give welcome to His Eminence Cardinal Agliardi when he arrived at five o'clock. The master of the games at the Institute of the Sacred Heart first gave a brief discourse on the ideals of sport and of the advantages they provide if rightly understood. The display was then commenced and was loudly applauded and pronounced excellent. His Eminence then addressed the boys. He spoke in high terms of the general training and skill and praised the initiative and talent of the leader.

*

Malta The Festive Oratory at Sliema Malta, appears to have made phenomenal strides, thanks to the energy of its Director and assistants and the generous co-operation of benefactors. Their latest event, an outing on a magnificent scale, reveals the consoling numbers of five hundred in attendance

at the Oratories in their various branches. By marching to the accompaniment of the band and by special train the whole party arrived at Città Vecchia. At the Seminary, lent by the Archbishop, refreshments were served out and after a brief rest the boys proceeded to Notabile and Rabato. Crowds gathered all along the route, and one could not help noticing the picturesque mingling of old and new, the quiet, sedate, conservative dwellings of the ancient stronghold of the knights, with the youngsters who formed the merry crowd of democrats—the hope of the future—marching merrily to the stirring strains of the Hymn of Don Bosco. The whole party was photographed on one of the Bastions, and here again the contrast was in evidence. On one side the old redoubt groaned under the burden of 20th century humanity, and on the other an old muzzle loader of the days of the Knights looked down disdainfully on the motley assemblage before it. Leaving the old gun to its meditations the boys were again taken to the hospitable Seminary. A plentiful repast had been arranged and as the chief benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. Galea passed from room to room, there were hearty cheers of thanks and welcome. How much happiness (remarks a local commentator) is being lost by many persons, who are blessed with earthly riches, but for a slight loosening of their purse-strings. Even on merely personal grounds, namely the pleasure that is derived from doing good to our fellow-creatures, it would amply repay them to do today, what they may not live to do tomorrow. To return to the outing.

In the majestic Cathedral of the city Benediction was given and hymns were sung under the shadow of the ancient and noble monuments of eminent members of our departed clergy. The return journey was then reorganised. A fitting and touching close to this happy day was a demonstration in front of Mr. Galea's house. On reaching Sliema the whole party was drawn up by the garden and in the glare of Bengal lights and amidst the strains of the Hymn of Don Bosco and God save the King, they cheered again and again for him who has made their welfare and happiness his chief aim in life. The inhabitants of Sliema are not slow in recognising their debt of gratitude both to Mr. and Mrs. Galea and to the Communities who are devoting themselves to the interests of the young.





Argentine Republic.

(TERRITORY OF SANTA CRUZ)

Rio Gallegos—The inhabitants—Religious indifference—Aspect of the surrounding country—Products.

RIO GALLEGOS, or simply *Gallegos*, is a settlement containing barely 600 inhabitants, the greater number Europeans, especially Spanish; but notwithstanding the limited population it is the most important centre of the extensive territory of *Santa Cruz*, and therefore the residence of the Governor and of the other authorities.

The name *Gallegos* dates from the time of Magellan. We are told, that unable any longer to endure on his ship the presence of several rebellious and disorderly Spaniards from Galicia, he abandoned them on these desert shores or rather at the mouth of a river which from that time has been called *Rio Gallegos*. But the actual village only dates back twenty years when it arose merely as a rival to the flourishing city of *Punta Arenas*, belonging to the neighbouring country of Chile. The Argentine Government, recognizing the importance of having a port of its own on the straits of Magellan, and not possessing a foot of ground in that part, encouraged the development of *Gallegos*, which is near the Straits; but, owing to the inconvenience of the harbour and the prodigious development of *Punta Arenas* which absorbs all the trade, the fact is that *Gallegos* after its first efforts when it numbered more than a thousand inhabitants, began to decline, and would have declined still more, had it not been sustained by the vicinity of *Punta Arenas*.

The majority of the inhabitants are Catholics; hence the Prefect Apostolic, Mgr. Fagnano, in September 1899 charged the Missionary Fr. John Bernabè to build there a Church and School which was at once well attended; the number

has gone on increasing so that last year there were nearly seventy including boarders and day-scholars. If any one thinks this a small number, he must remember that in the whole of Gallegos there are not more than 70 or 80 boys between the ages of six and fourteen, that is to say the age when the law requires attendance at School, and that, besides our School there is a mixed Government school. One can therefore infer that almost all the boys attend our schools and are taught our Holy Religion, and this is precisely our greatest consolation.

But even here it is often disappointing enough, especially when one sees boys of tender age who already show signs of impiety or religious indifference, notwithstanding our labours.... But this is not surprising, for children usually follow the example of their parents. In fact, the inhabitants, being in general traders and entirely absorbed in temporal affairs, seldom attend Church, so that the few faithful souls are pointed out and not always in a kindly manner; and what is worse many parents will not allow their children to perform their duties as Christians. This is indeed, a deplorable fact.

Another difficulty for the Missionary is the constant change amongst the inhabitants. The families who have been here eight or ten years are very few; the greater number arrive, remain one year, or at the most two, and then go elsewhere. It is therefore another source of disappointment to find that when we have begun to reap some fruit, we are obliged to begin all over again.

Although the statement seems a strange one it is yet a fact that the climate is no unimportant factor in the staying away from Church. Days without wind are rare and to this must be added the extreme cold, which sometimes falls in winter to as far as thirty degrees of frost,

And when I say the wind blows, do not imagine it is gentle breeze, but usually a wind so violent that once or twice a month it becomes a tremendous hurricane, sweeps down the streets, covers everything in the houses with dust, tears the sheets of zinc from the roof and sends them flying like feathers, blows down the chimneys and tears up the fences. On the Feast of the Purification last year it devastated the small garden we had laid out with so much labour and carried away the roof of two or three houses; and

this year, on the same day, as if to celebrate the anniversary, it destroyed a portion of the barracks 600 feet in length. And lastly, I may say that from the 12th of January till March it did not leave us a single day in peace.

With such winds you will readily understand that the flora of Gallegos does not enliven the view, more especially for those born amid European gardens, or amongst our Alpine valleys so rich in luxuriant vegetation and perfumed with the scent of a thousand flowers. Here all is drearily monotonous. To the South and West extends an immense plain burnt by the sun's rays and parched with the wind, and only in the distance is to be seen a hill breaking the line of the horizon. But he would be disappointed who should think to find there, amongst those hills, shady woods, pleasant valleys, or crystal streams. Nothing of the sort! You see only volcanic rocks and heaps of stones of the same kind, echoing the shrill cry of the hawk cowering on the top there in its nest; whilst between the stones you may descry the pointed muzzle of the fox, which, at the sound of the horse's hoofs, flies to its den. Those heaps of stones which are merely the sides of round hills at the top of which you recognize the crater of an extinct volcano are the only peaks which break the monotony of the plain. This would be covered with rich pasture, if the heavens were more bountiful in the supply of rain; and, if the wind did not tear them up, we should see a few flowers, especially in the neighbourhood of the thickets of *mata negra*, a kind of resinous pine and dark green in colour, which supplies the only firewood of the poor and which on the background of yellow grass stands out like the cypress in a cemetery. lofty trees are not to be seen even in the gardens, where with much attention and care a few straggling willows attain a height of seven feet.

With the exception of the emu (*rhea americana*) and the lama (*lama huanacus*) the skins of which are used for clothing by the Indians, even the fauna is not interesting. These are the only two animals which supply the natives with food and with the means of earning a livelihood. There is also the Patagonian fox (*canis cinereus*), smaller and less crafty than the European, and which certainly does no credit to its brethren in our countries. Another small animal, fairly numerous, which deserves mention, though well-known to Americans of these latitudes is the skunk (*mephitis suffocans*). It is a carnivorous animal of the size of a cat, in colour like a dark leopard, adorned with two white stripes along the sides of the body from snout to the broad tail. It feeds upon eggs, insects, lizards, small birds and mammals and sometimes visits the poultry-yards of country houses doing much da-

mage, the more easily as neither dogs nor men venture to approach it. This is the effect not so much of fear, as of disgust, on account of a greenish liquid with a suffocating odour contained in two glands which in case of danger it ejects a distance of more than seven feet. This is its sole weapon of defence, but so powerful that it excites extreme horror especially in those who have once experienced it. Suffice it to say that if a tiny drop falls on a garment there is no means of getting rid of the noxious odour and it must be burnt. Even huts must be abandoned, if this little animal, so beautiful to look at, has defiled them. When a dog has been touched by this liquid it runs about wildly as though mad, jumps into the water, rolls itself in the mud and for weeks and weeks seems to be stupefied. And yet the skin of the skunk, when cured, loses this odour and is much in request; and it is said that the flesh also is pleasant to eat.

These are the most important specimens of the animal kingdom in the neighbourhood of *Rio Gallegos*.

The only source of wealth and one not to be neglected in these countries is the rearing of sheep on a large scale. Each proprietor (*estanciero*) rents or buys at least two or three thousand acres of land, where he keeps any number of sheep up to ten thousand; the wool is taken every year to *Gallegos* and from there to the great European Markets.

But it is time that, leaving these details aside, I should speak to you of that small amount of good which your sons, with the blessing of God, have been able to effect. It seems scarcely worth recording, but for your own consolation, and also that our Co-operators may see we are doing our best, I add a brief statement.

Festive Oratory and small theatre.—Devotion to Our Lady—Amongst the prisoners—Baptism of an adult Indian.

As I have before remarked, the number of boys attending our school increases yearly; but this would not be satisfactory unless an increase in piety was also manifest, as, thanks be to God, is the case. The greater number do not fail to be present at Mass on Feast days and to attend Catechism. Amongst the older boys the Association of St. Aloysius has been established, so that all approach the Holy Sacraments once a month. In order to encourage them, we built a small theatre in accordance with the views of Don Bosco and it was a real novelty for *Gallegos* when, two years ago, on the day of the Distribution of Prizes, our boys for the first time played a farce in two acts, intermingled with gymnastic exercises, songs and dialogues. The authorities of the Territory with the principal families were

present and all were much pleased as well as surprised.

And here, to speak the truth, I must add, that slowly good is being done; and, by the good example of our boys in the novenas, the triduums and the Feasts of Our Lady, the attendance at Church is increasing. Every year, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception we have, weather permitting, a procession.

A poor wife, piously brought up, had been so misguided as to marry one who forbade her to enter the church! And yet, when seriously ill, she would not hear of receiving the Holy Sacraments out of fear of her husband who had threatened to divorce her, if she called in the priest. The wife's parents and sisters, good Catholics, were in the greatest distress and succeeded in getting me to visit the invalid, but without any result. It was in vain that I sought to persuade her in such circumstances to listen to the voice of God rather than to that of her husband; and I left her disheartened, exhorting her to begin a Novena to Our Lady Help of Christians, as it was the middle of May. On the very morning of the 24th, whilst I was preparing to say Mass, a sister of the sick woman arrived in haste, telling me to go quickly to hear her Confession and give her Holy Communion, because she wished to die fortified by the Holy Sacraments; she received them with great devotion and a few days after breathed her last in the embrace of the Lord.

A poor father of a family, employed in a public office, was found in a room from which a large sum of money had been stolen a short time before. Although the money was not found on him, still the suspicious and compromising circumstances multiplied in such a way about him, that he was sent to prison, because his protestations of innocence were accounted as lies. The family then had recourse to Mary Help of Christians, and this good Mother hastened to the assistance of the unhappy man arranging things in such a way, that the judge, after a few days, had to pronounce him innocent.

For some time I had been visiting a man suffering from a fatal malady, but in vain did I exhort him to prepare for death. When I touched upon that subject, he replied: "Do not speak of it, Father; I do not wish it. As to sins I have none and I will settle my affairs with God for myself!" and he was so vexed that it seemed better not to insist. Meanwhile the end was approaching. One evening, having received the usual answer, I returned home, and calling the boys together before Our Lady's altar, I made them pray for his conversion. If this had not happened to me personally I could scarcely have believed it. The next morning, going to visit

the sick man, as soon as he saw me, he said: "Father, I do not think I shall rise again from this bed; I beg of you, therefore, to hear my Confession." At these words I knew not what to answer. The Sacraments were administered, and a few days later, being well prepared, the poor man expired.

Amongst the prisoners, also, our Mission has been fairly fruitful. Every Sunday we give them an instruction on religious subjects or explain the Gospel, or teach Catechism; and in general there is ready co-operation with our efforts. Last year, speaking to them of the Mercy of God, I succeeded in bringing nearly all to the feet of the priest to obtain the pardon of their sins. And it was in the prison also that I met the first adult Indian to whom I gave Holy Baptism.

This poor creature had fallen into the hands of justice for a crime of which he considered himself innocent, so, whilst the others were furious and could not keep quiet, he worked in peace, and besides, devoted himself to study. I used to see him, in his free moments with his spelling book in hand, or kneeling on the ground scribbling on a bench! Thus, in a short time, he not only learnt to speak Spanish fairly well, but even to read and write it sufficiently to make himself understood. And yet he appeared so ignorant! When I began to teach him the Catechism over and over again I told him and made him repeat that there is only one God. The following day, I would return and ask him:

—"How many gods are there?"

And he would calmly answer:

—"Two."

—"Two?" I replied, "but what did I teach you yesterday? Did I not tell you there is only one God?"

—"Yes."

—"Why then do you tell me there are two?"

—"Yesterday one, today another, and tomorrow another!"

He had got into his head that God changed every day, like the days change in the Calendar. I continued to instruct him and I had the consolation not only of being able to baptize him, but also to give him Holy Communion in the public church, on Easter Sunday, his god father being the Judge, our excellent Co-operator, Signor Guglielmelli.

An expedition through the Territory — Three Baptisms—Amongst the Indians — Celebration of Holy Mass and more Baptisms.

After the 25th of last December, with Mgr. Fagnano's leave, I made an expedition through the Territory. In company with a lay-brother

I went at once to the place where the Indians have their *Carpas* or huts. This is a journey of three days from *Gallegos* and we travelled some forty miles a day. On the way there was nothing new, everywhere the same monotony. Only every now and then we saw flocks of emus fleeing across the country in all directions, or troops of *Guanacos* who, with a shriller neigh than that of the horse, break the sepulchral silence in which nature is enfolded. However on reaching a certain point, there is a change in the appearance of the land. We had before us a valley, watered by a stream, the *Coy*, which dividing and subdividing itself into many branches, gleamed like silver in the rays of the sun. The grass grew thickly and luxuriantly, and the white sheep recently shorn, stood out prominently in the midst of the green meadows. On both sides of the valley, with their roof of shining zinc, we descried the *estancias* and there the barking of dogs, the neighing of horses, the lowing of cattle, and the voices of the shepherds gave tokens of life, prosperity and happiness. It is a veritable oasis in the midst of the desert.

We were received, in all the *estancias*, with great kindness, though the majority of the proprietors are Protestants. I baptized three children on the first day of the New Year; and on the same day we resumed our journey, and after a whole day and a night spent upon the plains without any roof, we finally reached the huts occupied by Indian families, situated on the borders of a lake. To my great disappointment I found there only five families; all the rest having gone to hunt *guanacos* at a great distance.

The huts of these poor Indians, belonging to the race of the *Tehuelces*, are of a rudimentary character. Picture to yourself a few posts, about seven feet in height, fixed in the ground, crossed at the top by other pieces of wood, and covered with skins. The side facing south is left open and is closed only when the nights are very cold; when the wind blows from that quarter the skins swing backwards and forwards and the opposite side of the hut then remains open. Within these miserable huts the whole family lives, not human beings only, but the dogs and emus (or ostriches) also, for the Indians love these as if they were their own children. During the day the women are occupied in curing the skins of the *guanaco* which make splendid rugs; the men, on horseback, go out to hunt.

I found, as I have said, only five families, who received me very well and at once got ready a hut for me and the lay-brother, I remained some days with them, instructing them in our Holy Religion and had the consolation of administering eleven Baptisms. All the Indians, assembled

before our tent, assisted at this ceremony in religious silence. On a poor altar, constructed of three boxes, I also said Mass, amidst the barking of dogs who frequently came to sniff at the cruets; and surrounded by the Indians who, open-mouthed, watched all the ceremonies, without ceasing to pass round from one to another a gourd from which they sucked the *mate*. What a curious photograph might have been taken at that moment!

After giving to all a medal of Mary, Help of Christians, which they immediately hung round their necks, we returned towards *Gallegos*, more than satisfied with our excursion, which had lasted ten days.

Tomorrow, in accordance with the Bishop's orders I shall set off again to visit the whole Territory and baptize the numbers of Indians remaining there. On my return I will write. Meanwhile I remain

Yours most affectionately in Jesus Christ

PETER RENZI
Salesian Missionary.

India.

The feast of Mahamakham.

(From a letter of the Salesian M. Balestra.)

Doctrine taught in the books of the Hindus and maintained by the philosophers of the country is that the stains of the soul are the effects of sin and that the perversity of the will is the cause of them.

One of their poets, Veamna, expresses himself thus:

"It is water which produces mud and water which washes it away: the will is the cause of sin and it alone can cleanse the sinner."

This doctrine, although not observed, proves, nevertheless, that the Hindus are not ignorant that the change of will and the renunciation of sin are the conditions, without which pardon cannot be obtained and the soul be purified therefrom.

But this, truth which reason will never suffer to be destroyed even amidst the profound darkness of idolatry, has been obscured by the passions to which the Brahmins have become enslaved. These make them imaginé that without renouncing sin the soul may purify itself by other means.

Now, looking on sin as a material pollution, it is not surprizing that they consider ablutions as efficacious means for washing it away.

The ablutions which are practised in certain

privileged rivers, such as the *Ganges*, the *Indus*, the *Godavery*, the *Cavery*, etc., purify the soul and the body from all stain of sin. Even from a distance when it is impossible to repair to the place, it suffices to transport oneself thither in thought and imagine one is bathing there; the effect is the same.

The same purifying power is attributed to many famous springs and lakes in India, but these do not possess this efficacy except at certain periods more or less distant from one another. The celebrated lake situated in the neighbour-

purify them from sins, not only those already committed, but those they think of committing in the future.

This occurs every year in the month of March, when the constellation of *Makha* is in the ascendant, but when, during the revolving of Jupiter round the Sun, he is in conjunction with the moon, then occurs the *Great Mahamakham*, which recurs naturally every twelve years.

On that day a bath in the lake of *Mahamakham* has the same effect as that of many special baths taken in all the Sacred waters of India.



INDIA — The Kumbakonam Lake.

hood of *Kumbakonam* (Tanjore) does not acquire this property more than once a year, and in a greater degree every twelve years.

It happened that on the 6th of this month the above mentioned feast was celebrated in *Kumbakonam*.

Kumbakonam is situated about an hour's distance by train from Tanjore. It is a city filled with Brahmins and other pagan *Hindus* and is a place of pilgrimage for them. It is crowded with pagodas, lakes and other bathing places (very different from the bathing establishments in Europe) where the devout repair every year from all parts of India to worship the gods, and to bathe in the regenerating waters which

A popular legend narrates how the nine deities who preside over the nine rivers of India were complaining one day to *Kailasapathi* (the Lord of *Kailasa* or of Paradise) that they were so busy washing away the sins of the whole human race, that they were over-tired, and therefore they begged of him to find a more easy means for purifying the human race from sin. The *Kailasapathi* then indicated the lake of *Kumbakonam* where all might cleanse themselves from the load of sin and he promised that he himself with his wife and his sons would be present there once in every twelve years and precisely when Jupiter in conjunction with the moon is in the constellation of *Makha*.

On this account for the last ten days the stations have been crammed; the trains are taken by storm and even the vans, intended for goods, are filled with a crowd, and the streets wear an unusual aspect. It is an entanglement of carts drawn by horses and oxen: women with babies clinging to their sides: men with other children on their shoulders, others with pots for cooking the rice and all hurrying forward to the same goal.

At *Kumbaconam* the ground has vanished; no one is free to go where he wills, but must go where the human current takes him. You are squeezed tight there amongst the people, waiting one knows not how long for the human tide to move, then all of a sudden you are carried forward more or less quietly towards the lake.

Around the lake all is in order. Many small temples have their *Swami* (gods) streaming with oil, and thither an immense crowd of pilgrims go to pay them homage; they only await the favourable moment to cast themselves into the water. Scarcely has the Master of ceremonies announced this moment, when all, men and women precipitate themselves into the water, shouting tumultuously in a way difficult to describe; and very soon there is another crush, so that one can scarcely move. It rarely happens that such terrible confusion does not result in many being suffocated and always many go away with broken or dislocated limbs. But happy, they say, are those who lose their lives on this occasion; their fate should be envied rather than lamented, because these victims of religious zeal obtain immediately a higher place in the abode of happiness!...

Certainly it is sad to behold the superstition which blinds these idolaters, but it reminds me of the blindness in which so many non-practising Christians live, who no longer believe in the saving waters prepared by the goodness of Jesus Christ for the cleansing of their soul from all sin, the Sacrament of Penance...

M. BALESTRA,
Salesian Missionary.

The Land of Magellan

(South America)

Across Dawson Island.

Puntarenas,

Very Rev. Don Rua.



have just returned from Dawson Island where, after the retreat, I made a lengthy excursion accompanied by several lay-brothers, passing round the opening

called *Lomas Bay*, on to our auxiliary settlement of the "Good Shepherd."

Lomas Bay was the favourite resort of the Indian whom you met in 1892. On returning from his journey to Italy, where he had visited Turin, Genoa and Rome, he was asked which he preferred, Rome or Lomas Bay. He replied very decidedly that Lomas Bay was far the better, Rome being too hot for him. In fact after a few days among civilized life, he chose to return to the wild hills about Lomas Bay, and to the thick woods, living on the produce of the chase, on seals, fish and even whales which frequently get stranded on the shore among the stones and shallows. During my journey I myself saw three embeded in the sand, one of which measured some sixty feet. Two years ago a dolphin was similarly caught; it was of the species known as the *orca gladiator*, and measured about twenty-four feet. Its skeleton now adorns our natural history museum at Punta Arenas. The dolphin is an inveterate foe of the whale, and should the latter be attacked by four or five dolphins it would soon be killed and devoured, the *orca gladiator* being the most voracious of all the *cetacea*.

The vegetation of Lomas Bay is very luxuriant and produces many plants not to be found in any other part of these islands. One of them has been classified as the *Veronica Eliptica*. It is an evergreen like the myrtle which it closely resembles, bearing a white flower with a scent like orange-blossom. There is a species of long-stalked plants of so singular an appearance as to be veritable freaks of nature. They are twisted into the forms of snakes, the strange effect being caused by the wind, which, by its constant blowing, prevents them from growing up straight.

Our visit to the Indian settlement was quite unexpected; it was on that account the more welcome particularly to our confrères who are so completely isolated from any civilised intercourse. Some photographs taken by one of the lay brothers give a good idea of the progress of the mission, and also of the rapid development of the town of Punta Arenas.

Recommending our scattered mission to your prayers.

I remain

Your devoted son
M. BORGATELLO,
Salesian Missionary.





DEVOTION TO OUR LADY Help of Christians

We are persuaded, that no aid but that of Heaven can avail us in the sorrowful vicissitudes of our day, and that especially through the intercession of Her who in every age has proved Herself the Help of Christians.

PIUS PP. X.

To those who are keeping the 24th of the month as a day consecrated to Our Lady Help of Christians, in union with the main portion of the Association, the following intention is recommended: *That Our Lady Help of Christians may obtain special blessings on the scholastic work of the New Terms now commencing in all our Houses, and may continue her powerful protection over the youths confided to our care.*

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The keeping of the patronal Feast was necessarily an occasion of great splendour at the Institute of Our Lady Help of Christians in Rome. His Lordship, the newly consecrated Salesian Bishop, Mgr. Marengo, celebrated the Mass of General Communion, after which he gave the religious habit to four postulants. In the afternoon there was a procession in the Convent grounds. At the entertainment given by the pupils in honour of the occasion His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar presided. He was supported by their Lordships Mgr. Valbonesi, Mgr. Vattasso, and Mgr. Zonghi, while among the distinguished guests were the sisters of His Holiness Pius X. His Eminence highly praised the different items of the programme, and afterwards gave all a blessing in the name of the Holy Father.

At *Bologna*, His Grace Archbishop Della Chiesa presided over the celebrations, administering confirmation to a number of boys, and assisting at the procession in honour of Our Lady. At *Milan* also there was a great gathering of the faithful in the Church of *Santa Maria Segreta*, and *infra missam* the Director of the Co-operators gave the conference. At many other places the celebrations were honoured by the presence of the Bishop and distinguished citizens taking part in both the conferences and processions.

GRACES and FAVOURS

Cuyabá (Matto Grosso).—Accounts of special favours granted by Our Lady Help of Christians come from quite unexpected quarters. A young man living in the forests bordering on the district of Monte Alegre in Matto Grosso was attacked by a malignant fever which made him an invalid for about six months; during last December the illness took a turn for the worse and for a space of three weeks he was almost unconscious. Being without any medical aid, he and his mother knew not what to do for remedies, and accordingly they both turned to Our Lady making a promise to work for some days for the benefit of the Indian Mission, and to have three masses offered in honour of the Help of Christians; he also promised to make his First Communion and to publish the favour. He was quickly restored to perfect health, and the undersigned attests to having seen the young man who had come to the Mission for the fulfilment of his promise.

G. B.

Salesian Missionary.

Salerno (Italy).—After a few days illness I had apparently recovered sufficiently to get up, when a relapse came, bringing complications which made my state infinitely worse than before. The doctors soon despaired of my restoration to health, and I sent for the priest, to give me the last Sacraments. The Parish Priest was a Salesian Co-operator; he advised me to put my trust in Her who had restored so many to health and sent me the *Salesian Bulletin* where I read of wonderful cures. As I read I began to gain confidence in Our Lady and when I put down the paper I fell into a profound sleep, a thing which had been quite impossible for many days. The attendants were surprised at my long rest, and when I awoke after some hours a great change was apparent. We then commenced

a Novena, and during it I improved rapidly to the astonishment of the medical men. I am now perfectly well and send an offering for a Mass at her altar, and desire to have the favour published.

C. P.

Malta.—During April of last year I was very dangerously ill and the attendant doctor feared that a serious operation would be necessary. I was greatly in dread of this, and made a promise of an offering to the Sanctuary of Our Lady, if she would remove the need for an operation. My prayer was heard, and full of gratitude for my recovered health I hasten to fulfil my promise

G. De-C.

Milan.—In the morning of April 21st I wrote to the Sanctuary at Turin for prayers for the recovery from sickness of a person very dear to us, and we at the same time commenced a Novena. That very night the favour was granted, for there was a turn for the better and a rapid recovery. Full of wonder and gratitude I fulfil my promise.

M. M.

Preston.—I enclose an offering for a Mass in thanksgiving for success in an examination, after prayers to Our Lady Help of Christians and a promise of publication in the *Bulletin*.

A Client of Mary.



LIFE OF MONSIGNOR LASAGNA

SALESIAN MISSIONARY
TITULAR BISHOP OF TRIPOLI

CHAPTER XLVIII.

On the Doings of Charity.—Conferences at Mercedes. —Hypnotism unmasked. —A Conversion at Paysandú. —Blessing of the first stone of a new Church at Las Piedras. —The effects of a cyclone. —Presentiments. —At Rio Janeiro he contributes to the splendor of the Christopher Columbus festival. —His efficacious words. —At Guaratingueta. —A Scandal repaired. —Angry threats. —Vengeance?

The ardent wishes of the Salesians and of their pupils of Villa Colon and Montevideo had been fulfilled. They had succeeded in securing the society of the Bishop, his words had once more sounded in their ears, stimulating them in their labours and exercises of piety, inciting them to a truly religious and Christian life. They had celebrated with him the feast of Mary Help of Christ-

ians, the splendour of which was enhanced by the concourse of his many friends and benefactors. But the wishes of his sons at a distance were still unsatisfied; and his heart could not rest until all were pleased. So once more he set out to visit the other Houses of the Salesians and of the Daughters of Mary Help Christians, where his coming, looked forward to for more than a year, was awaited with impatience.

According to the diary of his secretary Fr. Bernardine Willaamil, we find him on the 26th May at Mercedes, where after having stimulated to still greater fervour the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, he preached to the Sisters of Our Lord in the Garden, gave a conference to the Ladies of the Society of St. Vincent of Paul, to the Children of Mary, to the Sisters of St. Joseph and to the Catholic Workmen. And this was not all: he laboured strenuously at the parish church, where he gave a course of instructions to put this congregation on their guard against hypnotism. With solid arguments he explained how it was contrary to the law of God, because no one can renounce the dignity of a free man, as the hypnotic subject does, whose will is in bondage to that of the hypnotizer; he showed how it was contrary to the sixth and the seventh commandment, because the person who submits to such an influence, especially when of the weaker sex, may become an instrument of immorality or of fraud; and finally he condemned it because it is now impossible to define the limits of hypnotism and of spiritualism, in which the devil intervenes. He concluded his instructions by proving the wisdom and prudence of the Catholic Church who prohibits the practice of hypnotism, in spite of certain medical men who persist in maintaining that it is lawful and harmless. And at Mercedes there was truly great need for clear, learned and authoritative teaching on this subject because one heard on all sides of the attractive hypnotic wonders performed by a certain Count de Dias, famous throughout that country for his numerous public demonstrations. And in order that his preaching might prove fruitful His Lordship sought the assistance of prayer from all the religious Communities and from all the pious souls in that city. God, indeed, blessed his labour and very soon the name and the teaching of the hypnotizer were buried in oblivion.

Few days had elapsed and already the zealous Bishop was amongst the Salesians of Paysandú, where he remained ten days preaching, hearing confessions and administering Confirmation. These good people profited by his zealous labours, and he had the joy of beholding the return to God of many souls who had wandered away from Him. Amongst others, we must not pass over in silence Miss Catherine Sambers, aged twenty one, who courageously abandoning Protestantism with all its errors, was received into the bosom of the true Catholic Church, in which alone salvation is secure. He gave her conditional Baptism, and, when breathing in her face he commanded the devil to depart and give place to the Holy Spirit, pronouncing with all the authority of God's minister those

words of the ritual: *Exi ab ea, spiritus immunde, et da locum Spiritui Sancto* the girl experienced a mysterious tremor through her whole being, clearly perceived by the Minister and those who were present. So true is it that the devil hates to leave a soul of which he has taken unlawful possession.

Returning to Villa Colon he took in hand another difficult and laborious undertaking. Each time that he visited the novitiate of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians at Las Piedras, especially on the occasion of any religious function, he was distressed to see so many persons and amongst them pious and noble ladies, crowded together in the room which served as a chapel.

He would have wished to provide that Institute with a church suitable to its ever increasing development, but there was always the great obstacle of want of means. Finally, convinced of its necessity, without other funds than an enlightened confidence in Divine Providence, he decided to begin the work, and on the 9th June the day chosen by these good religious for the celebration of the Feast of Mary, Help of Christians, he blessed the first stone of the new Church. Unfortunately it was not granted to him to see its completion.

On the 20th June we find him at Montevideo to visit the Bishop Mgr. Soler, the Paraguayan Consul, Signor Alonso Criado and Count Antonelli the Italian Minister to the Republican Government. As he had arranged to spend the following day also there at the Institute of the Sacred Heart, in Via Mercedes, where they were celebrating the titular Feast of the Institute, he did not return that evening to Villa Colon: this decision was providential, for otherwise he might have been exposed to serious injury. A cyclone of an unprecedented violence burst over the College of Pius IX: the whole covering of the gallery at the entrance of the Institute was thrown to the ground; the roof of the large dormitory was carried away and the tiles smashed. The debris, having broken through the ceiling of His Lordship's room, fell on the bed, and the rain, falling in torrents, flooded the whole place. It seemed as though it had been providentially arranged that he should be absent.

The Holy Spirit teaches us that the way of the just is like unto the sun which rises in the east, and whilst proceeding on its way increases its brilliance until it attains its midday splendour: *Iustus semita, quasi lux splendens, procedit et crescit usque ad perfectam diem* (1). Who does not recognize how applicable are these words to our Apostle, whom we might truly call a brilliant star in the Church's firmament? He devoted himself generously to Apostolic work, increasing daily the sphere of his activity, and by the power and dignity of the Episcopate, having gained the culminating point of his career, shed torrents of life and light wherever he went. His beneficent influence had extended itself over the Salesian Institutes of Uruguay; now it behoved him to do the same for the eastern portion of Brazil, where he

had not been for more than a year. And this his earnest desire he carried out in the August of 1895.

On the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption, after having sung Pontifical High Mass and preached, towards evening he went on board the steamer *Desterro* taking with him a party of ten Salesians and Sisters of Mary Help of Christians. They were a portion of the staff destined for the Agricultural School of Cachoeira do Campo and for the Girls' schools of Ouro Preto and of Ponte Nova which he intended shortly to found in the State of Minas Geraes. In leaving Villa Colon an unusual and mysterious sadness might have been observed on his countenance.

To the astonishment of all he made his will, gave various orders, showed a special tenderness to his brethren and to the pupils, and to one who manifested his surprise he replied: "One never knows what may happen in such long journeys!.... And yet he had undertaken many others longer and more disastrous, without a shadow of the gloomy presentiments which he was now filled. God inspires his own.

His journey was slow and painful: the *Desterro* stopped at every port along the coast to discharge or take in merchandise. His Lordship profited of these halts to land at Rio Grande, at Desterro, at San Francisco, where his visit was the source of much consolation and spiritual profit to many religious Communities whose acquaintance he had already made, as well as to many worthy Co-operators. It was only on the 25th August that the *Desterro* reached the Port of Santos, and the following day our Missionaries were received with great rejoicing at the Academy of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in S. Paolo, which became the Bishop's head-quarters. From there he started on his visit to Lorena, to Rio Janeiro, to Guaratingueta, or wherever the good of souls required his presence, and thither he returned as soon as he had concluded these Missions. We must abstain from following his footsteps in these fruitful expeditions, contenting ourselves with noting the more important events.

Through his means the city of Rio Janeiro celebrated a grand national festival in honour of Christopher Columbus, on the occasion of the anniversary of the discovery of Brazil. From his intimate knowledge of the temper of these youthful nations, he was not only convinced that one should respect their ardent and legitimate love of their native land, but he was of opinion that the Missionary should avail himself of this patriotic love, whenever an occasion presented itself to instil noble and generous sentiments into their minds, and thus to encourage the citizens to labour with heart and hand for the honour of their country by an unblemished life and by the practice of religion and of virtue, sole source of true greatness, both individual and national. It seemed to him therefore, most opportune to organize a solemn religious and secular festival at Rio Janeiro in honour of Christopher Columbus, and to render thanks to God for having bestowed on the valiant Genoese the courage to risk his own life with the

(1) Prov. IV, 18.

one object of withdrawing the American natives from their errors and degradation, by causing the light of the Gospel and of civilization to shine upon them.

Assisted by energetic Salesian Co-operators who thoroughly entered into his views and shared his enthusiasm, he was able to form a Committee capable of preparing suitable festivities. The members, without delay, set about collecting subscriptions, arousing the generosity of all well disposed persons by printed notices and by still more convincing speeches. In this way means were provided for the religious functions, for the decorations, for illuminations and for the musicians. His Lordship succeeded in having the large and beautiful Church of St. Francis of Paula placed at the disposal of the Committee for the festivities, he prevailed on Mgr. Amarin to celebrate Pontifical High mass with the greatest solemnity; and though he was not sufficiently proficient in the Portuguese language to speak it with perfect accuracy, he undertook to preach the sermon. His own courageous exertions and those of the Committee were crowned with the greatest success. The feast was celebrated on the 12th of October; and how magnificent it was we learn from the newspaper the *Apostolo* of the next day, from which we translate the following enthusiastic expressions: "Never probably has there been in Rio Janeiro, in Brasil or in the whole of America so splendid a feast as that celebrated on the 12-th of October. The auspicious event of the discovery of the New Continent never before had so magnificent and fruitful a commemoration, as that which we have witnessed in the streets, in the Squares, in public and private edifices. And the centre of all this joy, which peacefully irradiated the whole city was a Church.

"This Church was that of St. Francis of Paula, in whose ample spaces never before, perchance, had the Holy Spirit so powerfully moved the hearts of believers, and even of unbelievers who were there in great numbers, by means of the voice inspired, convincing, inflamed with charity, with which the Bishop Mgr. Lasagna spoke. The people heard from his lips a new style of sacred eloquence, irresistible to his audience. Truly a magnificent discourse....!

"The Church was decorated as sumptuously as possible; yet the sublime and marvellous was chiefly to be sought in the inspired discourse of this apostolic preacher. Was it then a monumental discourse to gain for the illustrious Prelate the title of orator? Such an idea was far from his thoughts. In his speech there was no shadow of art or rhetoric; the disciple of Don Bosco, with admirable simplicity, spoke those truths which sent all away touched and inflamed with zeal for the cause of the Christian education of the young, such as is given in the Salesian Institutes, and perhaps, for the first time as far as I know, thoroughly convinced of the necessity of labouring for the evangelization of the Indians."

Our Bishop, in one word represented Christopher Columbus to his audience as the first Missionary

of the American Continent, and demonstrated that it was the duty of all, who were privileged in being members of the Christian religion, to continue the work of Columbus, calling upon the hordes of savages to share in their moral and intellectual riches, if not by their own labours at least by their alms. He concluded by representing the Salesians as ready to follow in the footsteps of the Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Jesuits, hastening to the assistance of the Indians in order to make of them so many brothers in Jesus Christ: he gave the broad outlines of his journey to Matto Grosso and the honours of which he had been a spectator. No one will be surprised that his words had a marvellous effect.

He visited, afterwards, the College of the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians at Guaratingueta and, as the excellent dispositions of the inmates were to him a source of great consolation, so much the more was he grieved at the unhappy state in which he found the inhabitants of that extensive parish. There the priest charged by God with the care of souls, by conduct unworthy of God's minister had been the occasion of a terrible scandal. The bad rejoiced encouraging the unhappy apostate in his evil ways: the indifferent were discouraged, doubting whether they should still put faith in the teachings of priests; all the good were profoundly grieved. This parish needed a vigorous awakening, burning words of instruction, tearing asunder the mask of error and leading these souls repentant to the feet of the Pastor of Pastors, into the arms of Our Lord. The Bishop, after mature consideration, decided, notwithstanding his manifold occupations, to preach a Mission himself, and called to his side Fr. Dominic Albanello, who seemed to him the man most capable of assisting him in an undertaking of such great importance. In the evening of the 24th of October, the Missionaries made their solemn entrance into the parish Church and all the people manifested their readiness to listen to them.

On their side they were not sparing in their labours and self-sacrifice, and with God's blessing the seed fructified. In a few days the whole face of this populous town was changed; the scandal of the apostate was in great parts repaired by the zeal, the fervour and the learning of the Missionaries. Still it must not be thought that the powers of hell acquiesced in their defeat or desisted from their efforts to hinder so many souls from being reconciled to God. The friends of the apostate were not intimidated, but, recognizing that the good done by the Missionaries was a condemnation of their wickedness, they made use of every artifice and stratagem to hinder their work. They tried to create disturbances during the church services and especially during the sermons so that it was necessary to call in the police to maintain order and defend the life of the preachers at the very time when they were exercising their sacred ministry. They were not sparing of terrible threats in writing, in private and even in the newspapers. The fury of these madmen passed all bounds when they saw that the Missionaries taking no notice

of them, continued their fruitful apostolate. Nevertheless on the last day Mgr. Lasagna advised Fr. Albanello to withdraw, whilst he remained alone to complete the work and close the Mission, fully resigned, nay even desirous of dying a victim of the enemies of Jesus Christ. On the 4th of November, in the parish Church of Guaratinguetá there was the consoling spectacle of a General Communion, taking part in which, without any human respect, might have been seen many men who for years had neglected all their religious duties. On this memorable occasion, the Bishop, ascending the pulpit could not be otherwise than most eloquent: he spoke to his crowded audience of the consolations experienced during the Mission, and, moved even to tears, he exhorted them to persevere asking prayers for those even who had wished to render unavailing the grace of God and who had disturbed the tranquillity of the place. With a wonderful outburst of charity he implored his enemies to turn their weapons against himself, if only they would thus cease doing harm to souls. At the end was distributed a leaflet on which, with a portrait of Mgr. Lasagna was printed a souvenir of the Mission. Thus it appeared as if the zealous Bishop, even after his departure, continued to bless and exhort them to remain faithful to his teaching and to persevere in the right path. What wonder that the enemy of all good, enraged in beholding so many souls rescued from his clutches, should vow vengeance? And indeed the vengeance was worthy of him.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Three new foundations.—Preparations for departure.—Inexplicable hesitation.—Presentiments.—Unprecedented indecision.—Mysterious words and actions.—Vagaries of a train.—Design or accident?—Silence and gloom.—Sinister countenances and insulting language.—Sorrowful presentiments.—A relic in jest.—All pray.—The moment of the collision and the disaster.—The victims and assistance.—Heartrending scenes.—Peaceful aspect of our Martyr.—A noteworthy fact.

With emotion we draw near to the fatal moment equally sad and glorious, of the life of the heroic Apostle, the champion of the Church of God, the dauntless Salesian Missionary and Bishop, Mgr. Lasagna.

The time had come, settled in November 1893, for the opening of the Agricultural School at Cachoeira do Campo and of two girls' Schools in Ouro Preto and Ponte Nova in the State of Minas Geraes, the most populous in the Brazilian Republic. To carry out this project, Mgr. Lasagna, having chosen amongst the Salesians and the Sisters of Mary, Help of Christians, the necessary staff for the new foundations, had arranged that they should meet him at Guaratinguetá; as he intended, as soon as the mission was over, to start with them and accompany them to the new field which Providence had confided to his zealous labours. The Sisters were in charge of Sister Teresa Rinaldi, Visitor of Brazil,

highly esteemed by all for the greatness of her plans and the generosity of her sacrifices wherever the advantage of young women was in question. In all there were seventeen persons who, ready for any sacrifice, awaited a sign from the Superior to hasten wherever obedience called them. The departure of the Missionaries for Ouro Preto, then the Capital of the State of Minas (afterwards transferred to Bell'Orizzonte) was apparently fixed for the 4th of November, as the railway carriage for their journey had been retained for that day. But the numerous engagements of His Lordship and still more a certain hesitation already noted, quite inexplicable in one so well-known for his courage and determination were the cause of the departure being postponed till the following day.

Rising early, before setting their baggage in order they went to the chapel for their spiritual exercises, The Bishop, after hearing the confessions of those waiting for him, made his own Confession and celebrated Mass with apparent emotion. Afterwards whilst all were engaged in their preparations for the journey, he conversed a long time with Fr. Charles Peratto, Rector of the House of St. Joachim in Lorena. He was astonished to hear him speak so openly, revealing to him certain personal secrets, and giving special orders; he did not understand why he showed him such tender affection, which on other occasions he had not manifested. Not only this; the Bishop as if he could not tear himself away, and had still something further to communicate, asked him to accompany him for a part of the journey in order to continue the conversation. At half past ten the religious community of Guaratinguetá being assembled, the Bishop with deep emotion gave them his last blessing. On leaving the College he gave careful instructions to Fr. Foglino, Rector of the Institute, and then, accompanied by his brethren he set out for the station. All noticed that contrary to his usual custom his countenance was tinged with melancholy, and that even at that moment the Missionary, ever courageous, was still hesitating whether to set off or to remain. Unfortunately he decided to start.

At the station the missionaries entered a first class carriage, supplied by the Minister of Agriculture. This carriage was thirty-two feet in length and divided into two large compartments, one for the Salesians and the other for the Sisters, with a door between. A man of sinister aspect after carefully scrutinizing all the Salesians and the Sisters whilst they were taking their places in the carriage, surprised at not finding there Fr. Albanello, enquired of an official in a low voice where he was. And when he replied that the priest had started the previous day, the man rejoined: "He has deceived us; but no matter, he will not escape." These words, overheard by one of the Sisters and repeated to the Bishop, convinced him that those who had tried to interfere with the Mission of Guaratinguetá, were plotting some revenge. This was another presentiment of evil, which added to that sadness which had already been observed on his countenance when he left the Institute. Nevertheless far from allowing himself to be disheartened, to raise their spirits,

he turned it into a joke and exhorted them to place themselves in the hands of God whatever might be the fate awaiting them. A fervent ejaculation and generous offering of themselves to God was the responses of each one to his words.

Meanwhile the train went its way and on the 17th our travellers arrived safely at Barra do Piray where they spent the night, as there was no other train by which they could continue their journey. The next morning, having performed their spiritual exercises, the Salesians and the Sisters were at the Station punctually for the express at half past seven which via Lafayette was to take them to Ouro Preto. This train, owing to the breakage of a wheel, arrived nearly three hours late. This was the first mishap in this unfortunate journey.

Another train was put on and our Missionaries, to their dismay, saw that it was arranged in this fashion: behind the engine was a luggage van, then the Missionaries' carriage, after that the Postal van and the other first and second class carriages. Fr. Dominic Albanello, who had there rejoined the party, naturally complained to the Station-Master of the position assigned to the Missionaries' carriage; but he took no notice of what was said. This was an incident more than sufficient to increase the anxiety of our travellers and it was not the only one.

Eventually the express started for Juiz de Fora. The magnificent scenery through which they passed was new to the Missionaries; though near mid-day the heat was not excessive; neither were they inconvenienced by the dust from which they had previously suffered. Nevertheless sadness and silence prevailed amongst the religious, interrupted now and then by some short prayer. One could have said that each one was suffering from some inexplicable discomfort, resembling sea-sickness; they could not sleep nor take any food. Mother Teresa suffered most of all and this increased the trouble of her spiritual daughters. Their uneasiness was augmented by a terrible hurricane with incessant thunder and lightning and torrents of rain which at one time seemed to bring the train to a standstill.

It was three o'clock when the Missionaries reached Juiz de Fora. This is the finest of the modern cities of Brazil, built in the European style and surrounded by lofty hills covered with virgin forests. Near the missionaries' compartment were assembled several men of sinister aspect; they stared at the priests and Sisters and broke forth into imprecations, threats and horrible blasphemies. They alarmed the poor Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians, who hastened to close the Venetian blinds; but these ruffians rejoined with a devilish smile: "Ah yes! you can close them... but in a little while you will see!!!" To what these miscreants alluded the Salesians and the Sisters could not imagine. And as they continued their devilish conversation, Fr. Zalti, unable to tolerate such impious effrontery, got out of the train in order to reprove the most insolent amongst them. Who quickly retired; and the train making ready to start, the good priest re-entered the carriage

without saying a word. Nevertheless *those words of sinister meaning* had so impressed themselves on the minds of the poor nuns, that they could not but make them a subject of conversation. Oppressed by sad presentiments they enquired:

—"What could be the meaning of those horrible threats?"

—"Why do they want to injure us, who have only the best intentions?"

—"Shall we, perhaps" said another, "have the happiness to suffer something? Then we should deserve the name of Spouses of Christ."

—"Could we but reach heaven with the martyr's palm!"

—"But to be martyrs it is necessary to be put to death out of hatred for Jesus Christ and His Church."

One of them, turning to Mother Teresa, said smiling: "Before going to martyrdom, Mother, leave us a relic."

Playfully replying to the jest, the Superioress took off a shoe and tossing it over to her, she said: "Here is the relic; keep it." They all laughed and thus the conversation ended.

Meanwhile the train resumed its headlong course and the religious began to pray. Some were saying the Rosary, others were making the *Hour of Guard*. On their side, the Priests began to say their office. His Lordship also and his secretary were engaged in spiritual exercises: all were praying.

They had travelled a little over half a mile from Juiz de Fora when they heard repeated whistles from the engine. The Bishop put his head out of the window and he trembled on seeing another train dashing onwards to meet their own. For a moment he thought there was a double line of rails; but looking more attentively at the line, and seeing a man jump off the engine he was under no delusion a catastrophe was imminent. The two engine-drivers who, owing to a sharp curve on the line, had not seen what was before them, in an instant, finding themselves at such close quarters reversed their engines and even, at the risk of their own lives tried to stop suddenly; but it was too late and they only succeeded in slackening speed, so that the Bishop exclaimed: "My God, a collision! Mary, Help of Christians, preserve us!" He had not finished when, like lightning, the two trains collided; one engine mounted on the other with a tremendous crash and they were reduced a heap of rubbish; the carriages telescoped one another; the postal van rising on end broke into the Missionaries' carriage, smashing the seats, crushing the occupants, and stopped half a yard from Fr. Albanello and Fr. Zalti. These had a miraculous escape and beheld with horror their splendid carriage in an instant reduced to a heap of chips, seats, scraps of iron and... corpses. At their very feet lay a Salesian and a Sister bathed in blood.

(Continued),

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM
Gerent, GIUSEPPE GAMBINO — Turin, 1909
A. I. S. for the diffusion of the 'Good Press'
176, Corso Regina Margherita.

Sacred Heart Catholic Schools,

TROTT STREET, BATTERSEA, S.W.

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BALANCE SHEET, 1908-9.

RECEIPTS.				EXPENDITURE.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Balance at Bank, 1/3/08	...		54	2	10		
<i>By Subscriptions.—</i>				<i>Building a/c.—</i>			
Annual Subscribers...	...	10	2	0	Ekins & Co. ...	...	96 6 4
Quarterly „	...	9	0	0	Arding & Hobbs ...	...	6 6 0
Occasional „	...	5	13	11	Georg Trott ...	...	0 18 9
Very Rev. Fr. Provincial, S.C.	...	12	0	0	H. Denton ...	...	1 19 7
Sacred Heart Club ...	...	2	7	6	Green & London ...	...	1 9 4
District N ^o 1. ...	...	16	14	11	V. Fontana ...	...	4 3 6
„ „ 2. ...	...	24	17	9	de Kreshman ...	...	1 10 0
„ „ 3. ...	...	12	18	4			112 13 6
„ „ 4. ...	...	18	6	8	Entertainment a/c ...	...	38 17 9
			112	1	1	In part Repayment of Loan	
<i>By Entertainments.—</i>					L. & S. W. Bank.:	...	60 0 0
Annual Concert ...	...	11	11	6	Interest on £300 Loan at 4%	...	12 0 0
Garden Party ...	...	94	13	5	„ „ £500 „ „	...	20 0 0
Irish Social ...	...	3	2	10	Miscellaneous ...	...	13 2 1
5 Whist Drives ...	...	15	6	4			
Bazaar a/c. ...	...	5	12	0			
			130	6	1	Balance on March 1st, 1909...	39 16 8
			£296	10	0		£296 10 0

Audited and found correct,

E. J. COLLIER }
 GEO GARDINER. } *Auditors.*

WM. J. KELLY, S.C.,
Hon. Treasurer.

March 3rd, 1909.

Our debt now stands as follows: £30 to Messrs. Ekins and Co., and £740 as loans to be repaid plus interest 4%. Roughly £770, towards which we have £39 16s. 4d. balance at Bank. The debt then is £730 3s. 4d.: Will you co-operate in a work of eminent charity? Then assist us by a generous contribution.

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